

***The Institution of Engineers, Australia: Sydney Division
Engineering Heritage Committee***

Oral History Program: Biographical Notes

**Francis (Frank) George HOLE (1912 -)
Civil Engineer**

- Birth & Family:** Born 26th March 1912 in Sydney. His father was an engineer in the Public Works Department.
- Education:** Primary education was at North Broken Hill Public School.
When his family moved to Bathurst, Hole was sent as a boarder to Sydney Church of England Grammar School (Shore) in North Sydney, where he gained his leaving certificate in 1929.
- Qualifications:** B Sc Sydney University 1933
BE Civil (Honors 1st Class) 1935
- Work History:** For his compulsory work experience during university, Hole served for six months with the Department of Main Roads (DMR), doing Depression Road Works from Old Bonalbo to Woodenbong.
In 1935 his first job as a qualified engineer was with the DMR at Coolac, where his work covered the reconstruction of the Hume Highway over approximately 120 kilometres. During this time he lived out of the local hotel.
He was not particularly happy, so when it was offered, he accepted a job as an Engineering Draftsman in September 1935 (*do we know where – with what firm?*). His main task was preparing fabrication drawings of steel members for the Storey Bridge in Brisbane.
In October 1937 he was employed by consultants Macdonald, Wagner and Priddle in Sydney. The work was mainly to do with structural steel and reinforced concrete for architectural works. The consultants were also involved with the peanut silos.
Before World War 2 began, Hole joined the RAE Militia Unit, but when war began one of the consultants, A E Macdonald removed him, saying that he was needed in civilian employment more than at the front.
He married in 1940. .
As work lessened due to the war, Hole moved to the Allied Works Council in 1941. He began as a supervisor and coordinator of government instrumentalities. He later became a supervisor of the construction of army installations.

In 1943, Hole enlisted in the RAE. He served in the Lae Base area in New Guinea. The army needed engineers and he assisted in the construction and reconstruction of airfields, roads and other military installations. One of his special jobs was the building of a small power station and this was a forerunner of much of his later work. He then became ill and was sent home to an army hospital from which he was discharged in November 1945.

Hole was employed at the Experimental Building Station at North Ryde where he investigated proposals to improve house construction. In early 1947 business was beginning to increase again and Hole was invited to return to Macdonald, Wagner and Priddle. During this time, the firm was asked to construct additions to the Balmain Power Station, near the Iron Cove Bridge.

In 1948 the company was asked to build the Boolimba 'B' Power Station on the banks of the Brisbane River and eighteen months later, the Tennyson Power Station. Both stations had a number of problems concerning the sites that were chosen, but these were all successfully overcome. Macdonald, Wagner and Priddle also worked on the Swanbank Power Station near Ipswich.

In 1958 Hole took six months leave and travelled with his wife to the United Kingdom, United States and Canada. He was notified that his company had been assigned to oversee the first stage of the construction of the Sydney Opera House. Hole didn't have much to do with this, for which he is thankful, because in his opinion the job was a nightmare.

He was involved with a number of other power stations, including Gladstone and Collinsville, though his involvement was limited. In 1971 Macdonald, Wagner and Priddle became incorporated.

After the death of Ray Priddle, Hole became the second Chairman and his work was mainly administrative from this point on.

He retired in 1979, at the age of 67.

Following his retirement he began a language course at Macquarie University but, for various reasons, did not complete it.